



Osprey Observer Summer 2019

EDUCATING . CONSERVING . RESTORING

Message from the President

by Jim Peterson

How healthy is our planet? Most people would probably guess it is not very healthy, but it might just be a little worse than we thought. A recent report stated that more animal and plant species are threatened with extinction than at any time previously in human history. The report was released by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Service (IPBES) in March. The report is grim, stating that the loss of biodiversity on earth will also start to affect human wellbeing. The range of plants and animals threatened is enormous, from all types of plants to animal species ranging from large predators to amphibians, down to the tiniest of insect pollinators like bees.

There is hope however. The report mentioned that protected lands around the globe, are healthier, and provide protection of biodiversity. Conservation and restoration of natural lands is critical to help save endangered species, slow climate change, and produce energy and food crops. There is a movement supported by top scientists and National Geographic that has a goal to preserve 30% of the land on the planet by 2030, and 50% by 2050. Many environmental organizations around the globe are doing their best to educate and bring about change to improve the health of our planet.

It is time for each of us to make a difference. We should encourage our local and state governments to set aside more land and help restore degraded ecosystems. As an environmental scientist, I often get discouraged hearing about cuts in funding for preservation and scientific research.

One way to help the planet is to assist with collection of scientific data. This is called citizen science. Local volunteers, guided by a trained scientist, help collect scientific data. With the rapid rate of environmental change, it is critical to document plants and animals, and citizen scientists are adding important knowledge about the state of our planet. Citizen science projects have already been used to document changes in plants, birds, and butterfly populations. It is a fun and educational way to get people into the outdoors while learning about the scientific process and plants and animals. All ages and groups can participate, including students, clubs, families; basically anyone who is willing to get their hands dirty and donate a few hours of their time to help the environment.

The Oakland Nature Preserve offers opportunities for participation in citizen science projects. Depending on your interest and experience, these range from simple recording of animals and plants you see to participation, or leading other projects. For simple recording and helping with identification, you can use the iNaturalist platform. This app allows you to post pictures of what you see. Then experts will help you identify it. There is an Oakland Nature Preserve Project in the iNaturalist app. Other, more formal, projects include participating in projects including characterizing pollinators, butterflies, and birds. If you wish to volunteer or have additional questions about volunteer opportunities at the Oakland Nature Preserve please contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Nicole O'Brian.

Lastly, I want to ask for your support for environmental education at the Oakland Nature Preserve. We were just awarded an education match grant by a private foundation who has been extremely supportive of our mission. If we can raise \$15,000.00, they will match it. These funds stay at the preserve and are used only on our education programs. Any donation is appreciated.

Thank you!

Upcoming Events

- June 1 – Insect Safari
- June 12 – Summertime Story Time
- June 13 – LIT Camp Training
- June 17 – 21 – Summer Camp (Habitat 101)
- June 24 – 28 – Summer Camp (Creatures of the Night)
- July 3 – Summertime Story Time
- July 6 – Insect Safari
- July 8-12 – Summer Camp (Backbone Not Required)
- July 15-19 – Summer Camp (Florida Time Warp)
- July 22-26 – Summer Camp (The Lorax, and more)
- August 3 – Insect Safari
- August 7 – Summertime Story Time
- August 31 – FMNP Environmental Interpretation Begins
- September 7 – Insect Safari
- September 13 – FMNP Upland Module Begins



**Be sure to follow us on Facebook
for Preserve news and events!**

22nd Annual Oakland Heritage & Wildlife Festival



SATURDAY, OCTOBER 26TH
SPEER PARK, OAKLAND

Heritage Presentations
Silent Auction
Food Trucks
Live Entertainment
Lake Apopka Boat Tours



Wildlife Up-close
Hay Rides
Kid's Activities
Children's Art Show
Merchants & Vendors



All proceeds support the
Oakland Nature Preserve
www.OaklandNaturePreserve.org



Double Your Gift for Education

Help us meet the challenge by August 31st!

Oakland Nature Preserve is delighted to announce that we have received a Challenge Match Grant for our environmental education programs! This grant will provide matching funds of \$15,000 if we are able to raise \$15,000.

This is extremely valuable to our environmental education programs, which serve people of all ages in both Orange and Lake counties. I am very proud of our educational accomplishments over the years, and with this opportunity we can continue to develop and expand our programs.

Your donation will be matched, dollar for dollar, so your contribution will have double the impact and will directly help fund our educational programs throughout 2019-2020 school year.

Together we can meet the goal to raise \$15,000!

Oakland Nature Preserve is an active 501c3 organization, and your donations may be tax deductible. You can make checks payable to Oakland Nature Preserve and mail to P.O. Box 841, Oakland, FL 34760. Please note on the memo line that your donation is for the Challenge Match Grant.

You can also visit www.OaklandNaturePreserve.org and click donate to have your gift matched. Thank you for your continued support of Oakland Nature Preserve!



Restoration Monitoring Project

by Craig Duxbury

Restoring natural areas is one of the Oakland Nature Preserve's central mission. The Preserve has about 20 acres in upland that is currently being restored. The hard work of our volunteers has started to transform these upland areas back to the native longleaf pine community. This forest community covered much of the southeastern United States, and is home to many plants and animals found nowhere else in the world.

As part of this restoration, we conduct periodic monitoring of these upland areas. We recently surveyed the Red Trail Restoration area. Using a team of Volunteers and Preserve Staff, we recently identified and counted the number of plants in small areas (called "plots") (see picture of team). We will then compare our results to measurements conducted five years ago. This will help us guide our future restoration efforts.

Please come out and see some of the restoration work at ONP. You can see how an area that was once covered in orange trees is now being slowly transformed into the native longleaf pine community.

If you are interested in participating in restoration and citizen science projects, the ONP offers many opportunities. These can include helping with removal of non-desirable plants, identification of plants and animals--even on your own (using iNaturalist as an option)--to helping us with more formal monitoring projects.

Please reach out to us!

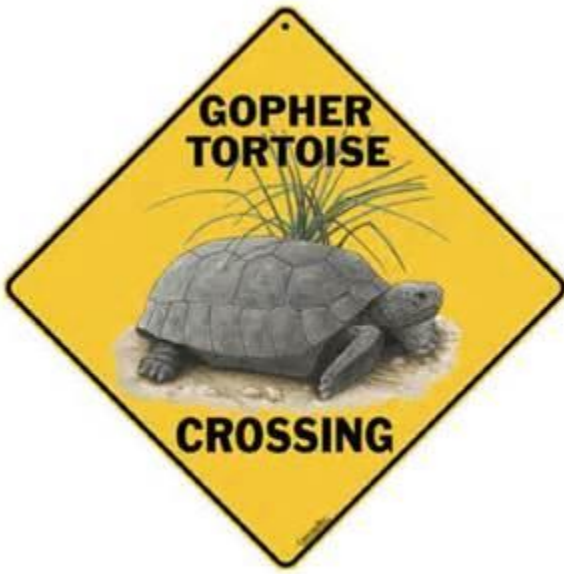


ONP COMMUNITY BAG PROGRAM BENEFICIARY

Exciting news! ONP has been selected as a beneficiary of the Community Bag Program for the month of July. The Winn Dixie Community Bag Program, which launched in February 2019, is a reusable bag program that facilitates community support with the goal to make a difference in the communities where shoppers live and work. ONP was selected as the July beneficiary of the program by store leadership at the Winn Dixie located in Clermont. We will receive a \$1 donation every time the \$2.50 reusable Community Bag is purchased at this location during the month, unless otherwise directed by the customer through the Giving Tag attached to the bag. For more information on the Community Bag Program, visit seg.bags4mycause.com.



Please slow for Gopher Tortoises



Vehicle-caused mortality is a large contributor to gopher tortoise deaths. Often, tortoises burrow and forage for food near roads because roadsides are open and sunny. Here are things that you can do to help reduce road mortality:

Observe speed limits and wildlife crossing signs

- Remember gopher tortoise activity is highest in the mid-morning and mid-afternoon.
- When driving, scan the road and shoulder ahead. Gopher tortoises are slow moving, so allow them time to cross the road.
- If you would like to make your neighborhood a more tortoise-friendly community, crossing signs can be ordered from: wildcotton.com

Do not remove the gopher tortoise from the area.

•You may help the tortoise cross the road by placing it out of harm's way in the same direction that it was going. DO NOT take the tortoise with you or move it to a different area. Also, do not put your life in danger to move the tortoise.

MyFWC.com June 2019

Saturday, October 26th

10:00 a.m.— 4:00 p.m.

A great day of family fun!

Wildlife Presentations

Merchants with Great Wares

Silent Auction

Live Entertainment

Cultural Presentations

Hot Food and Cold Drinks

Kid's Activities / Trick-r-treating

Hay Rides

Guided Boat Tours

For more information visit
OaklandNaturePreserve.org
(407) 905 0054



Support the Oakland Nature Preserve! A local project developed by volunteers for the benefit of the community.

Sponsorships are an important part of the Oakland Heritage & Wildlife Festival and a great way to show your support of the Oakland Nature Preserve. If you are interested in supporting this event please contact the office or visit the website.

Vendor applications are now available at www.OaklandNaturePreserve.org

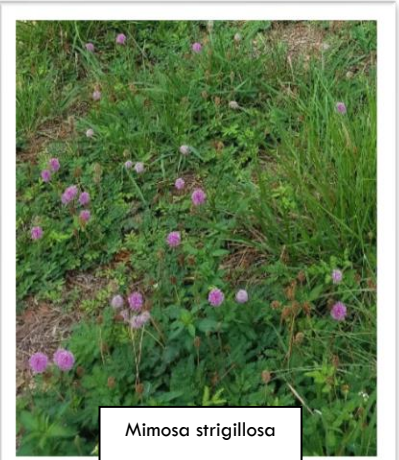
Do you have a great Silent Auction item you would like to donate? Give us a call at 407-905-0054.

What's In Bloom

by Denise Byrne

There is a lot in bloom right now in the uplands at the Preserve:

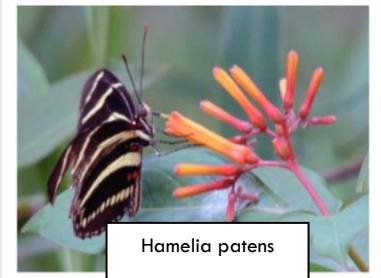
- Mimosa/Powderpuff, *Mimosa strigillosa*, is in bloom around the Education Center and Butterfly Gardens. The leaves fold up when touched, giving it another common name: "sensitive mimosa". An important cover species, this species of mimosa provides many ecological functions: the seeds are eaten by quail, songbirds, and Gopher Tortoises; foliage is eaten by gopher tortoises and wild turkeys; it is pollinated by bees and is the larval host of Little Sulfur Butterfly.
- Purple Passionflower, *Passiflora incarnata*, is also known as maypop and passionvine. It is a deciduous vine that climbs by tendrils and spreads rapidly with underground runners. It is a larval host plant for numerous butterflies including Gulf Fritillary Butterfly, *Agraulis vanillae*, Zebra Longwing, *Heliconius charithonia*, Variegated fritillary, *Euptoieta claudia*, and the Banded Hairstreak *Satyrus calanus*. Young tendrils are eaten by Wild Turkey. The fruits are edible by mammals, including humans. At the Preserve you will see Purple Passionflower in bloom on the Red and Orange Trails.
- Firebush, *Hamelia patens*, in the Bird, Butterfly and Dean Gardens, is a wildlife attractant for a variety of butterflies, hummingbirds, wasps, and halictid bees. Bees are considered the principle pollinator because they crawl down the floral tube to access nectar. The leaves are food for the Pluto Sphinx and Nessus Sphinx moths.
- Turk's Cap Mallow, *Malvaviscus arboreus*, related to hibiscus, has petals that are folded spirally and only partially unfurl to form a turban-shaped flower, to encourage pollination by hummingbirds. You will see Turk's Cap Mallow around the Education Center, the luscious flowers are a favorite of our resident Gopher Tortoises.



Mimosa strigillosa



Passiflora incarnata



Hamelia patens

In the wetlands you will see:

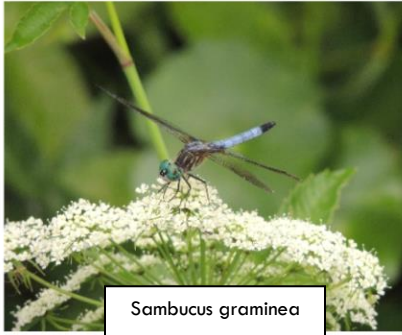
- Buttonbush, *Cephalanthus occidentalis*, which attracts butterflies, bees, and hummingbirds. The seeds are a source of food for ducks and shorebirds.
- Elderberry, *Sambucus canadensis*, is a member of the honeysuckle family. Its fruits (black berries) are popular with birds, and the flowers attract a variety of pollinators.
- Grassy Arrowhead, *Sagittaria graminea*, attracts lots of pollinators, and its seeds are eaten by birds.
- Pickerelweed, *Pontederia cordata*, has vibrant purple flowers that attract a variety of butterflies, wasps, and bees. One species of solitary ground-nesting bee, *Dufourea novaeangliae*, only uses Pickerelweed to gather nectar and pollen. Small seeds are produced that are food for a variety of animals, including ducks and other waterfowl. Deer and geese will munch on leaves and roots of the plant, while fish, birds, insects, amphibians, reptiles, and other critters use pickerelweed as cover. Dense mats of growth provide excellent

cover for pickerel fish, which feed on the insects that are attracted to the flowers of this plant (giving the plant its common name). They don't live in Lake Apopka, but manatees also eat pickerelweed!

- Scarlet Hibiscus, *Hibiscus coccineus*, produces beautiful blooms that provide nectar to a variety of pollinators including the specialist Rose Mallow Bee and Ruby Throated Hummingbirds. This plant also hosts caterpillars of gray hairstreak, painted lady butterflies and several moths and skippers.



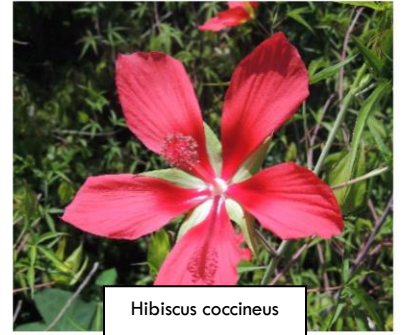
Cephalanthus occidentalis



Sambucus graminea



Pontederia cordata



Hibiscus coccineus

We Dig our Volunteers by Nicole O'Brien

Volunteer Spotlight: Jeff Ditzler

Jeff has been a consistent volunteer since November 2017. He comes once a week to assist with maintenance and small projects as needed. You can often find him down the boardwalk, repairing or replacing planks; he has been instrumental in ensuring our boardwalk remains safe. Jeff is always eager to help and often brings new friends with him. We love his enthusiasm!

Photo: Jeff in white and Maurice in pink with the removable box they built for our new golf cart.

We have many ways you can become involved as a volunteer:

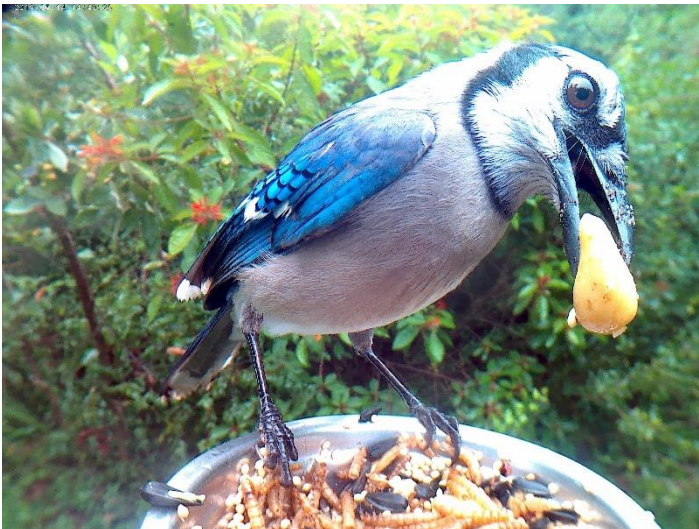
- Restoration volunteers assist with uplands habitat restoration
- Maintenance volunteers help with trail and general preserve maintenance
- Data Entry volunteers take care of our visitor log database
- Museum Docents greet and interact with visitors
- Festival and Event volunteers help us run our events as well as table for us at offsite events
- Special Youth Volunteer Programs
 - Eco-Interpreters interact with education center visitors
 - Leaders In Training assist with summer camp



Critter Cam Update

A big thank you to everyone who donated to our Tail Camera Monitoring Fundraiser, in the last few weeks we have captured photos of resident bobcats, coyotes, raccoons, opossums, and rabbits in the uplands.

The bird camera is being visited by many juvenile songbirds. Check out ONP's website or Facebook pages for the most recent photos.



Registration Now Open ~ Limited Space

Florida Master Naturalist Programs

Environmental Interpretation

August 31 - September 2

Upland Systems

September 13 - October 18

Join us for these exciting classes!

The Florida Master Naturalist Program (FMNP) is an adult education UF/IFAS Extension program developed by the University of Florida. FMNP training will benefit persons interested in learning more about Florida's environment or wishing to increase their knowledge for the use in education programs, volunteers, employees, ecotourism, and others.

The FMNP consists of 3 core modules, each module is 40 contact hours, and 5 special topics course with 24 contact hours each. Activities include fieldtrips, hands-on activities, practical experience, and classroom learning.

For more information on class schedule, instructors, field trip locations, and to register please go to www.masternaturalist.ifas.ufl.edu. Select "Current Course Offerings", go to Uplands or Environmental Interpretation, and then Orange County.



Oakland Nature Preserve, Oakland, FL

www.oaklandnaturepreserve.org

407-905-0054



OAKLAND NATURE
PRESERVE

Sleepover at ONP

Girl Scouts and leaders from Oakland troop 1684 and Winter Garden troops 828 and 1709 spent the night in the ONP classroom! On Friday night the scouts created crafts, ate pizza, enjoyed a night hike to see the fireflies, roasted marshmallows to make s'mores, and sang camp songs. After a good night's sleep the scouts ate breakfast and then participated in a service project with Volunteer Coordinator Nicole. After the scouts got cleaned up, parents and families joined the girls at the amphitheater for a wonderful Bridging Ceremony where they all moved up to a new scout level. After the ceremony they had refreshments in the classroom before heading home for a nap!

If your group is interested in spending time at ONP please email information@oaklandnaturepreserve.

